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## THE CRAYON.

NEW YORK, APRIL 4, 1855.

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## Sketchings.

## EXHIBITION OF THE ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

## NO. II.

WE will recur again to the subject of invention treated of in our last critique. It may not have seemed sufficiently clear, that invention was synonymous with recollection, yet that such is the case will be made evident by a little reflection. If you sit down to draw any object, you first look at it, and then bearing the image in your mind, you attempt to transfer it to your paper. The chances are ninety-nine to one that you get it wrong, and find it so on looking back to your original. You have forgotten its exact form or tint, and must refresh your memory by another sight. An act of memory is requisite even in sketching, and the act is the same if an interval of months occur between the object's being seen and your drawing it. If you attempt to invent, you only call up images which the memory retains, not perhaps in the same order, but still essentially the same, and in no case is the image created except in the action of pure imagination, which is of so rare occurrence, and so inexplicable, that we need not here consider it. The mind has no images or ideas of external things which it has not received through the senses; and no man can conceive of an object which he has not seen in some form, simple or combined.

It may seem that we are going out of our course in a disquisition better fitting a metaphysical work; but if invention be a desirable quality in Art, and it is attainable by cultivation, it is important that the nature of such cultivation should be understood by the artist, and as well by those whose intelligent appreci-

ation is necessary to his progress in his studies. It being, then, but a form of recollection, it is evident that the same exercise which strengthens memory will make invention more active, and this every school-boy knows, is study, close, assiduous, and intense study, leading to the minutest and profoundest knowledge. If an artist wishes to demonstrate this to himself, let him select two objects in Nature for which he has the same degree of regard, and sketch one only with attention to its broader qualities, and the other without regard to artistic effect, but as minutely as his vision will permit him, even to the finest veins in the leaves of a plant, and then, after an interval of time shall have elapsed, let him draw the two as he recollects them. He will find the latter distinct in form when the other will be entirely lost. The latter he *knew* perfectly—the former superficially.

Now, fluency of invention is essential to any attainment of high excellence in the nobler artistic traits, because until the mind is perfectly at ease in its command of material, it cannot select, combine, or idealize. It must have stores of images, or it is poor in choice, and can only express its sentiments in forms unsatisfactory to itself, and, of course to others. But if it has a facile invention, *i. e.*, commands a great range of images, or recollections, it is at once easy to give expression to our poetic sentiments, for the material through which we attain such expression comes as it were of its own accord. We have not overrated invention, then, when we say that it is the first requisite to the existence of a great school of Art; and if the public would encourage the growth of such a school, let them insist that our young artists acquire that knowledge of Nature which we have shown to be the beginning of invention. Let them follow her with the faithfulness of perfect humility, not venturing to alter or amend that which she sets before them, but copying it with the greatest exactitude in every respect. While they are studying, let them never attempt to teach her how she ought to have done things. It is idle for them to insist on their poverty as an excuse for not studying faithfully, because, even considered pecuniarily, a faithful study from Nature is worth more, and will be more eagerly sought than any picture which cost the same labor and thought. For instance, compare the study by Colman, before alluded to, No. 23, with the picture by the same artist, No. 116. There is not an intelligent picture-buyer in the city, who would not rather have the study than the picture at the same price.

Following upon this great deficiency in our landscape Art, comes another which has its origin, in part, in the same causes, *viz.*, a want of propriety in the selection of subject. There is a tendency to rush to the grandiose—a striving for that which is striking and palpable. The true poetry of Art consists, not in being able to grasp huge themes, so much as in elevating simple ones to beauty and impressiveness. That is a poor Art whose riches do not lie at hand, where they may be reached at any moment, but rather in some far off Italy or

tropics; whose grandeur or renown, feeding our curiosity, yet leaves to starvation our perception of familiar and home-endearing beauty. That Art is richest whose treasures are most easily got at.

Take for instance a picture by the French Rousseau, or the English Linnell—a simple way-side nook or fragment of neglected forest—common enough, we should say, but upon that commonness Nature bestows her light and shade, her color and her delicacy of form and finish—it was worth all her efforts to beautify—it is worth all theirs to regard and reproduce.

But our artists rush to huge mountains and mighty cataracts, flaming sunsets and wild effects, the occasional ejaculations of Nature, varying her tranquil and serene labors. An elm is at least as beautiful as a palm, and a ruined tree as picturesque as a ruined tower. We cannot but regard this propensity among our landscapists, to consult the grandiose in Nature as a very great mistake, and a perpetual source of weakness to our Art. Curiosity has no part with the artistic emotions, it belongs to the antiquarian or naturalist, and if it be permitted to enter into Art it obscures its real ends. We believe that it will always be found that the greatest artists find their subjects most easily, and a difficulty in being suited is a confession of weakness. The best eye for Nature is not that which has the widest range of vision, but that which sees the most in a given range, and so a true seer will find in every ramble pictures better than he can paint.

Our want of historical associations with landscape, has somewhat to do with this, because in those scenes which have a human interest for us, we are more eager to find that which is beautiful; and as, from rational or personal associations, we dwell more lovingly on any scene, we shall find in it more of the common charms of Nature.

The abundance of subjects for the pencil has itself a tendency to make us superficial in our selection, just as a poverty of new material in England compels her artists to be keen-eyed and subtle in their selections. There is probably not a scene in England of great natural attractiveness, which has not been painted again and again, so that to produce anything new the artist is compelled to exercise his greatest ingenuity, either to find some new point of view, or some new beauty of treatment which shall redeem his picture from triteness, and is forced to work the vein of beauty to its last golden atom. It would be well if we would compel ourselves to the same closeness of attention, and so enlarge our wealth by restricting our resources.

What we say of choiceness of subject is equally true of composition, which is indeed but another form of choice. The best we can do in composition is to take the arrangements of Nature with such emendations as our sense of harmony may suggest, and it has always been the case that the noblest compositions, so called, have been those which were but little changed from actual views. It is not possible for human in-

tellest to put a scene together so harmonious as a whole as those which Nature combines, though we may benefit her combinations sometimes by an intelligent eclecticism, and no composition is perfect until it seems to be a view from Nature, because the slightest appearance of artificiality makes the artist evident, which, as such, he never ought to be.

Thus Durand's "In the Woods," based on a study from Nature, while it is more harmonious in its arrangement than we could expect to find an actual view, strikes us in no wise as the work of the artist, but as a passage of Nature uncommonly beautiful. This is true in all Durand's pictures, but in none, to our mind, so eminently as in this. Study the "Summer Afternoon." You will hardly feel that it is anything rare in its subject—you are conscious that it is a scene of great beauty and harmony of lines, but you may have passed a hundred such in your last summer's excursion, and you are sure you will find another such when you go out again. You love it all the better because it is common and familiar, and you recall perchance a hundred incidents of your past life connected with just such little spots—such springs and such crooked tree-trunks. Casilear's pictures have much of this same excellence, of just and subtle choice of subject—a simple pool of water and its surroundings is enough to satisfy his Art. In No. 34 he has given such an one, and here observe how the exquisite passage of distance does its work in setting off the composition. It is entirely modest and unobtrusive, but it is sufficient. So No. 146, simple roadside scene as it is, has more of the essential beauty of Nature in it than many pictures far more pretentious and labored.

In Cropsey's Mt. Washington, is another instance where the selection of the point of view gives much of the value of the picture. It would be easy to find a fine view of the mountain, but not so easy to adapt the foreground so as to give the greatest value to the distance. A few yards on either side of the point chosen by the artist would have changed the whole picture. There is a picture by Hubbard, No. 90, which is another good instance of choice of subject, with reference to the effect to be produced. Gifford's Conway Valley is another where the whole value of the picture depends on the beauty of the stream running through the foreground meadow.

The third deficiency we shall insist on, is a want of subtlety of treatment. Certain facts of Nature being given as the basis of a picture, we must treat them in such a way as to give each part its greatest value with reference to the whole, and yet not permit it to be obtrusive. Supposing a given scene to be painted by two artists, one of them subtle in his management and the other palpable, while both will tell the same truth, the picture of one will be quiet, full of harmony and repose, and the other hard and repulsive, because everything in it will be uneasy and seem out of place. The first will attend carefully to each object with regard to its relation to the rest—he will

see that the arrangement of the light and shade shall be as broad as is proper, and that nothing shall interfere with the purpose which the whole picture has in his mind. We call it simple, broad, massive—words expressing the qualities such a picture impresses us with. This makes the technical part of Art, and corresponds to logic and rhetoric in literature. Its effect is, that while it makes the whole picture impressive, it leaves the mind to search out the detail, and discover the minor beauties as it thirsts for more delight; detail does not annoy us by forcing itself too early on attention, but comes in its due order, and, when sought out, and only then, is found. In the shadow thrown across the valley in Cropsey's Mt. Washington, you see the trees start out from the darkness and the brook wind along, but you only find them when you look for them; and off in the burst of sunlight across the distance, you feel the nature of the ground given very accurately, but again only where you look for it. This is subtlety of treatment. You see it again in Kensett's large picture, in the painting of the mountains, where, in the modulations scarcely perceptible of the distances, he has expressed the undulations of the hills, and the crags, and ravines, which, if they had been told more plainly, would have destroyed the distance of the whole. In Durand's pictures, again, we find the highest degree of this excellence—always broad, simple, and full of repose, they express the master in their subtlest modulations of light and shade, or color. Casilear's pictures are good examples: Hart has a good aim at breadth.

As a general thing, however, our landscapists are palpable in their treatment, depending too much on the subject presented by the picture, and not caring enough for the way in which it is presented. Truth, out of place, seems falsehood; and while it is cowardice to slight individual truth, because it may seem to interfere with general, it is coarseness and vulgarity to obtrude the individual without sufficient regard to the general. Both are the extremes, and inadmissible. The true mean is attainable, and should be insisted on, at whatever labor or thought. We have, in this respect of subtlety of treatment, one great master—Durand, in this respect inferior to few, if any, modern artists; and the school which, at our age, has produced one master, cannot be regarded hopelessly.

#### PRE-RAPHAELITISM.

NEW YORK, March 23, 1855.

MESSEURS. EDITORS:—As the term "pre-Raphaelite" has become a "household word" in Art criticism, and as many of your non-Artist readers may be in an equally unenlightened state, will you, in your next number, please explain the exact meaning of the term, provided it can be done without encroaching too much upon your space, and thus oblige

AN INTERESTED READER.

We have hesitated to enter on the subject of Pre-Raphaelitism, although solicited to do so many times, because we hoped for a communication from an English contributor, who is

better acquainted with the school called Pre-Raphaelite and its works than we are; but, as the article has not come, we will do our best to give the information desired, and if we are not exactly right, our English correspondent will correct us.

The name "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood" was assumed by a fraternity of young artists, who, being of more than usual earnestness, had become disgusted with the shallow and conventional simulation of Art which seemed to command the public taste and patronage of England, and, feeling that the namby-pamby spirit which actuated the great majority of the artists, had nothing in common with the sincerity and intensity in which the great artists of the past had arisen, they determined to go back to first principles, and reject entirely the teachings of artists, working out their own solution of the problem of the representation of Nature. Justly assuming that conventionalism began with Raphael, they assumed the name Pre-Raphaelite to signify their determination to go behind conventionalism and represent what they saw as justly as possible. Their works were immediately marked by their intensity of thought and elaborateness of finish, rivalling, in this respect the mediæval painters whom their name connected them with. They seemed to defy all limit to the elaboration of detail, and carried it, in fact, to a point an unpractised eye can scarcely appreciate—to a rivalry with the works of Durer and Bellini.

But following on this exceeding faithfulness of study, came necessarily a certain hardness and rigidity of their forms, and a want of grace which made their pictures sometimes seem little less than grotesque. This peculiarity cannot be understood in its nature and causes by any one who has not, like the Pre-Raphaelites, attempted to be absolutely true without regard to prettiness or agreeableness of any kind. Such an one will have felt, perhaps, that, from the effort to be thus minutely true, there arises a constraint in a drawing—a want of freedom in its lines which can only be perceived and felt, but cannot be defined or corrected. The labored study gives a rigidity and awkwardness which is painful, but the keenest eye could scarcely discern the distance which lies between the awkward form and the graceful one—the breadth of a line would change it, but it requires the eye of a Raphael to find which way that line ought to fall. Any one can illustrate this for themselves by taking an engraving of a gracefully drawn face, and tracing it on transparent paper. Then compare the two and you will find that the tracing is awkward and ugly, though you cannot see wherein is the difference between the two.

This was the case with the pre-Raphaelites. They had, by their exceeding care, given a constraint to their drawing, which, to the unappreciative feeling, is very offensive, and in their case was characterized as ugliness, and which a perception still far short of perfect, would not enable them to correct into the absolute truth and grace of nature. There are only two horns

to this dilemma—to go back and compromise by obtaining partial truth and partial grace at once, or go forward in this severe process of training until their perceptions should have been developed to that power that they should be able to see the infinite line wherein perfect truth unites itself to perfect beauty—the subtlest, noblest and divinest problem of Art.

The true definition of pre-Raphaelitism then, is that it is a phase of Art preliminary to the attainment of the ideal of truth and beauty—not desirable in itself and for itself, but as a condition of Art, preparatory to something most desirable, and which can in no otherwise be attained than through this unfaltering devotion to truth, though it were temporarily repulsive in all its results.

We would call the attention of our readers to the advertisement of Dwight's Journal of Music. As a genial, earnest thinker on his Art, Mr. Dwight is admirably fitted to conduct such a journal, and we have always found much to interest in its perusal. It depends entirely on artistic thought for its position, and deserves the attention of all who desire to study the theory of music. It is about commencing a new year, and we are glad to know with an encouraging increase in circulation, and, we are sure, in influence also.

#### FOREIGN ART GOSSIP.

**THE LOUVRE.**—The Museum of Antiquities is composed of 262 statues, 180 busts, heads, and herma, &c., 180 bas-reliefs, 288 inscriptions, miscellaneous objects 192. Total, 1,214 works of ancient Art, valued at 50 millions of francs (£2,000,000 sterling). The Portraits of the Artists, who at different epochs have most contributed towards the construction and establishment of the Louvre, have been placed in the Galerie d'Apollon. Amongst them are the portraits of Jean Goujon, by M. Alexandre Hesse; Coysevox, by M. Emile Lecomte; Du Cerceau, by M. Louis Boulanger; P. Puget, by M. Brisset. It is stated also, that these pictures are to be reproduced as specimens of Gobelin Tapestry.—*The Artist*.

ONE of the most magnificent publications of the day is a work entitled *Les Arts Somptuaires du Ve au XVIIe Siècle*, edited by M. Ferdinand Séré. The plates represent furniture, vases, jewels, costumes, armor, printed in colors, gold and silver, and exhibit the high degree of perfection to which the Art of chromolithography has arrived. To the historical painter, as well as to skillful artisans in the various branches of industrial Art, this work affords a rich treasure of authentic examples of rare value. The cost of the work is exceedingly moderate, quite within the reach of every one likely to make use of it.—*Ibid*.

**ART IN BELGIUM.**—The Art specimens destined for the Great Paris Exhibition will be publicly shown at the *Cercle Artistique*, at Brussels, from the 15th to the 22d inst. On the 14th of May next there will be a competition for the prize offered by the Antwerp Academy for Belgian engraving—the prize consisting of a travelling grant of 2,400 francs for four years. Only six candidates will be admitted to the competition.—*Ibid*.

SPAIN has now two great Art schools, that of Madrid and Barcelona, which, however, follow opposite directions—that of Madrid following French Art principles, while Barcelona is entirely *Overbeckian*.

A NEW process of engraving is announced. The operation is as simple as it is ingenious. It consists in drawing the subject with a particular kind of crayon on a plate of zinc; the design is then covered with a mixed powder of resin, pitch, and bitumen, which becomes a varnish, and spreads itself upon the parts which are covered by the design traced by the crayon. To obtain these lines in relief the plate is plunged in a bath of sulphate of zinc, and connected with the positive pole of the galvanic battery opposite another plate communicating with the negative pole. The electric current corrodes the zinc left uncovered by the crayon, and the drawing remains in relief. From this plate a mould is taken in gutta percha, in which copper is deposited, producing a plate perfectly engraved, from which impressions can be taken by the ordinary printing-press.—*Ibid*.

**NOVEL APPLICATION OF GOLD AND SILVER IN BRONZE FOUNDING.**—A colossal statue of the late king has been modelled and cast in the Industrial Institute at Berlin, and is now undergoing the process of chasing. A special addition of ornament has been imparted to it by a very rich inlaying of gold and silver in the dress and other drapery of the royal costume—to an extent and degree of execution never before attempted for a similar purpose. For the purpose of obviating the inroads of time and weather, the gold and silver have been employed in the highest degree of chemical purity. It is believed that this pattern statue will be sent to the Great Paris Exhibition.—*Ibid*.

**THE THERMA OF POMPEII**, lately discovered, are of wider extent than any hitherto excavated, but, strange to say, are without any ornamentation. Neither have objects of common use been found here, or in the adjacent excavations; and thus they have either been searched and despoiled soon after this partial entombment, or excavations unknown to us had taken place here in former times. Outside the Therma some large mural paintings have been discovered, amongst them a recumbent lion, nearly of natural size, of very fine design and execution, and not hitherto found as a constituent of Pompeian mural ornament. The excavations, however, proceed slowly, as hardly twenty of the feeble inhabitants of the south are employed in this gigantic task.—*Ibid*.

**MONUMENT OF WINCKELMANN.**—At Stendal, near Magdeburg, the birth-place of Winckelmann, a monument is to be erected to that great archaeologist and Art philosopher. The cost has been mostly obtained by subscriptions; and Professor Wickmann, at Berlin, has offered his gratuitous services in making the model, while the celebrated bronze foundry of Count Einsiedel will bear the expenses of casting, chasing, &c.—*Ibid*.

**ORLEANS.**—On the 8th of May next, a double artistic solemnity will take place. On that day will be inaugurated the new statue of Joan of Arc, by M. Foyatier, and the Hotel de Ville, restored with much skill by M. Albert Delton, architect. The city of Orleans has appropriated £16,000 to the restoration of its Hotel de Ville in the style of the period at which this structure was commenced.—*Ibid*.

THE beautiful fountain of the *Carrefour Saint Victor*, near the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris, constructed some twelve or fifteen years ago from the designs of Feuchères, and representing Nature with the various productions of the earth at her feet, is now being restored. This fountain is dedicated to Cuvier, the great naturalist.—*Ibid*.

THE attractions of the Louvre increase. A new room, dedicated to the antiquities of Asia Minor, has just been opened. Amongst other curiosities it contains are, a Frieze from the Temple of Diana Leucophryene, from Magnesia, and twelve Greek inscriptions from Olymos. In

the Egyptian Gallery a curious statue from Memphis has just been placed. The figure is painted red; its eyes are plated bronze, incrustured with crystals. The statue has no inscription, but is supposed to be of the pyramid age. Two coffins of kings of the eleventh dynasty are shortly expected.

Mr. Bonomi writes:—

"19 Beaufort street, Chelsea, Feb. 20

"Will you pardon my asking you to favor me with a little space to state what has chanced to come under my observation respecting the coloring of the Egyptian and other sculptures of the Crystal Palace. In the first place, with respect to the colossi of Abusimbel. Although very slight indications of color are to be found outside the temple to which those statues are attached, there are few things more certain than that they were *entirely* painted with all that intensity of red, blue, and yellow, with which Mr. Owen Jones has caused their *fac similes* to be invested in the Crystal Palace. The same may be said of all the sculpture on the walls of the Egyptian courts, as any person who has been up the Nile as far as Thebes will testify. It has, however, been asserted, that statues made of basalt, or granite, or alabaster, or any other more precious and durable material than lime and sandstone, were not painted. To this it may be answered—that as these substances are entirely unabsorbent, color is less frequently found on them; yet there are not wanting examples of painted granite statues in the Museums of Europe—and the stain of colour was distinctly to be seen on the head of the Young Memnon, and may even now be detected through the surface of smoke, which the statues of our national collection have acquired since their residence in Bloomsbury. Also, in favour of painted granite, may be quoted the walls of the granite sanctuary at Karnak; so that, if I may be permitted to state the conclusion to which these facts have led me, I should say, that no Egyptian statue, whether of wood or stone, or even bronze (there being two bronze statues in the British Museum which had gilt and colored ornaments), was considered finished without the addition of color. With respect to the colored architectural decorations of the *marble temples* of Greece, whatever may be our opinion as to the exact tint, intensity or opacity, of some or all the colors used by the Greeks, we have the accumulated evidence of all the modern investigators of civilized Europe as to the fact, viz., that the white marble mouldings and statues of the pediments, metopes and frieze of the temples of Greece were stained partially or entirely. How it happened that the graceful forms of the colored ornaments, in the cavities of the ceilings and in the protracted places of the architraves, which must have been so much more distinct 100 years ago, should have been considered by Stuart to belong to a less brilliant period of Grecian Art than the temples themselves, one cannot imagine, unless, indeed, he had imbibed so strong a prejudice against colored decorations as to become blind to their exquisite beauty—and this reflection should make us very cautious how we absolutely condemn the attempts that have been made in the Crystal Palace to restore the color of the frieze of the Parthenon.

"I remain, &c., JOSEPH BONOMI."

THE French Government are about to despatch a ship to convey to France the antiquities discovered by their consul at Nineveh. Of these, the most remarkable are, a monumental gate, some extremely ancient statues, and various implements in brass and iron. They have already, with extreme difficulty, been brought to the banks of the Tigris, down which they will be conveyed on the usual native rafts. It is expected they will reach the Louvre in time for the Exhibition.—*Athenæum*.

**THE NEW MUSEUM AT COLOGNE.**—The fact that a private individual should have given during his lifetime 100,000 thalers (£15,000) for the erection and founding of a museum for his fellow-citizens, has caused a great sensation in Germany, and measures have been taken to have the building commenced forthwith. The plans have been submitted to the public before being decided upon, and are now being widely discussed by the German press. It is agreed that a northern aspect is the most favorable for an exhibition of pictures, and it is a matter of discussion whether the museum shall have a flat or an inclined roof.

**GREAT ART-CYCLOPEDIA.**—The Paris Academy of Fine Arts (French Institute) have named a commission for publishing a Dictionary of the Fine Arts. It is composed of Messrs. Halévy, Condère, Simert, Lebas, Henriquet, and Leber.—*Artist.*

**AUTOGRAPHS.**—At a sale held at the Salle Sylvestre, Paris, an autograph letter of Catherine de Medicis to Henry III. sold for 36 francs; three letters of Madame de Maintenon for 123 francs; Paul Veronese to Marc Antonio for 72 francs; one of Gluck, the composer, for 119 francs; two notes of Louis Philippe's for 2 francs.—*Ibid.*

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